

How a Story is Written.

A writer in the Academy, who evidently belongs to the class of readers who insist upon remembering popular authors through the things which the authors themselves have forgotten, rather than those which have since made them popular, has recovered from his inconvenient memory the fact that once upon a time Anthony Hope began in a magazine, the name of which he omits to mention, a series of articles entitled *The Fly on the Wheel*, and that they came to an untimely end, a circumstance which terminated Mr. Hope's connection with journalism. In one of these articles, this writer says, the question was asked by a woman, "Oh, Mr. Fly, how do you think of those lovely stories?" or by a man, "I say, Fly, old chap, how the deuce do you turn out all that stuff of yours?" which question was answered by a page from the *Fly Journal*, the genuineness of which will, we think, be acknowledged by the experience of most writers who are dubious of themselves and the work in hand. But here is the Fly's, or, rather, Mr. Hope's journalistic answer:

Let us suppose I am bidden to write a short story. I arrive at my working den at about 9:45 and read my letters. The rest of the day is as follows:

10:00—Put on writing coat; find a hole in the elbow.

10:03—Light pipe and sit down in large arm chair by fire.

10:15—Who the deuce can write a story on a beastly day like this? (It was quite nice weather, really—that's the artistic temperament.)

10:45—I must think about that confounded story; besides, I don't believe she meant anything after all.

11:15—I wish the—these—people hadn't asked me to write for their—paper!

11:45—Hullo! Will that do?

12:00—Hangit, that's no use!

12:30—I suppose if I happened to have a head instead of a turnip I could write that story.

12:40—Yes! No! By Jove, yes! Where's that pen? Oh, where the—? All right, here it is! Now, then. (Scribble.)

1:00—Lunch! Good; I believe it's going!

1:30—Now I'll just knock it off. (Scribble.)

2:15—Well, I don't quite see my way to—. Oh, yes, I do! Good! That's not so bad.

3:00—One, two, three—300 words a page. Well, I've put that in in good time, anyhow! Where's that pipe?

3:15—I think I'll fetch 'em. Pitched in passion, by Jove!

3:40—Oh, say, look here! I've only got about 1,200 words and I want 2,000. What the deuce shall I do?

3:50—I must pad it, you know. She mustn't take him yet, that's all.

4:00—She can't take more than a page accepting the fool, though; it's absurd, you know!

4:15—Oh, confound it!

4:45—Now, let's see—two, four, six, seven. Good! I'm in the straight now!

5:00—Thank Heaven that's done! Now I suppose I must read the thing over. I know it's awful rot. Well, that's their lookout; they've bought it.

5:03—It's not so bad, though, after all.

5:11—I rather like that. I don't know, but it seems rather original.

5:15—M'm! I've read worse stories than this.

5:20—No, I'm hanged if I touch a word of it! It's not half bad.

5:25—Pretty smart ending!

5:30—Well, if there are a dozen men in England who can write a better story than that, I should like to see 'em, that's all.

5:35—Puff, puff, puff! Well, I shan't touch a pen again today."

She Was Too Mad to Speak.

The Washington woman came across some excellent tea in England—tea the like of which she had never known before. She knew there was none of it to be had in America, so she bought pounds and pounds of it to bring home with her. She didn't mean to pay duty on it, for she felt that no really patriotic American can consistently pay a tea tax after what our ancestors did in Boston harbor, so she made herself a petticoat, and into the lining thereof she quilted the tea. When the steamer drew into port, she put on the garment. To wear it was martyrdom. It seemed to weigh a ton. She could scarcely walk in it, and the hang of her new going ashore gown was utterly ruined by it, but the custom house officials let her pass without suspicion. She went directly to the railway station and started for Washington. The journey will live long in her memory for its discomfort. Her husband met her at the station. He marked her pale, worn look. As they stepped into the carriage she told him the story.

"I wasn't going to let them get ahead of me," she said proudly. "Wasn't it a lovely idea?"

Her husband fell back in the carriage and roared.

"Lovely!" he said. "Lovely! I should say it was. Why, my dear, there isn't any duty on tea."

And let me remark in passing that the child's sob in the silence isn't by any means the only thing that curseth deeper than the strong man in his wrath.

Naturally Enough.

"I gave that poor man one dollar a few days ago, and told him to come around and let me know how he got along."

"Oh, that was good of you! He was your bread cast upon the waters."

"I suppose he was. Anyhow, he came back 'soaked.'"

The signal department of the United States army has awarded a contract for three electric automobile telegraph and balloon wagons to be used by that department of the army. Two of the vehicles are to be designed for heavy work, and one for light work. They are to be used in connection with balloon work and experiments in wireless telegraph. The heavy wagons must be able to carry not less than 800 lbs., besides the driver, and must be capable of storing a sufficient charge of electricity to run twelve miles. These wagons are to be arranged for conversion into a signal corps station, with telegraph lines for use at military headquarters; and a switchboard will be provided by means of which the entire output of the battery at fifty-five volts may be available for general service. The light wagon must be able to carry at least four persons, and to run twelve miles on a single charge. The vehicles will be supplied with duplicate batteries, and so fitted that they can be drawn by horses. Each wagon, including the extra battery, will cost about \$3,300.

Three very similar railway projects are now claiming the attention of the engineering world. The trans-Siberian railway, across the backbone of Asia, will shorten enormously the time necessary in a trip around the world. In Africa, Cecil Rhodes has an elaborate scheme for a railroad from Cairo to the Cape, and in this hemisphere the Intercontinental Railway Commission has just completed a seven-volume report on the surveys for a railroad which would make a through line from the States to Buenos Ayres. Three continents it is thus proposed to span with iron highways.

WHY KETTLES SING.—The reason is a very simple one. As the water gets hot little bubbles of steam are formed at the bottom of the kettle. These in their rush upwards strike the sides of the kettle, and set the metal it is made of in vibration, thus causing the humming sound we call singing. You will notice that a large copper kettle the sides of which are thin will emit a much louder and more musical note than a common iron kettle.

Mr. W. J. Clarke has suggested a means of detecting the presence of a ship or an iceberg by wireless telegraphy. The apparatus which he proposes is so arranged that when two ships approach each other a large vibrating gong will ring in each, and the transmitter is so arranged that the signal would be operated at a distance of from one to ten miles. Mr. Clarke claims that if it were made compulsory that sea-going vessels should be so equipped with the necessary outfit, it could be carried out at a small cost.

It was the shank of the evening in Berlin. "Good evening, Herr Police Officer," said the citizen.

"Come with me," was the policeman's answer.

"Donner-wetter! Was ist lost?" asked the astonished citizen.

"You that it is evening assumed, have when the emperor not dined has yet already."

The Emperor of Japan is entitled to be considered the most aristocratic ruler on earth. The Royal Family of Japan has a genealogical tree which reaches to Adam. There have been 121 Emperors of Japan, and they all belong to this family. The first one governed Japan just about 2500 years ago. He was on the throne 300 years before Alexander the Great thought he had conquered the world. The Japanese have the history of all their Emperors from that time down to this, and they assure you that the Mikado is a lineal descendant of the first Emperor.

One day Dr. Talmage, the famous American preacher, opened a letter in his pulpit, according to his custom, which he found contained a single word, "Fool." He mentioned the fact to his congregation, and then quietly added: "Now, I have known many an instance of a man writing a letter and forgetting to sign his name, but this is the only instance I have ever known of a man signing his name and forgetting to write the letter."

NEWSPAPERS FOR ONE-TENTH A PENNY.—Owing to the cheap quality of paper used for Chinese newspapers and to the low price of labor, both literary and mechanical, the native papers are issued at an extremely small figure. The price of an ordinary Shanghai journal is four cash, or about one-tenth of a penny.

A CURIOUS CUSTOM.—A singular custom prevails among the Tartars or Kurds. If a man loses his cattle or other property he pours a little brown sugar into a piece of colored cloth, ties it up, and carries one such parcel to each of his friends and acquaintances. In return he is presented, according to circumstances, with a cow, or sheep, or a sum of money.

Admiral Dewey's favorite watch is made of steel from the sunken battleship Maine. Captain Sigsbee, who commanded the ill-fated war vessel at the time she was blown up, carries a simple timepiece.

NEW ZEALAND BIRTH-RATE.—The New Zealand birth rate has been steadily diminishing during the last two decades. In 1882 it was 37.3 per 1000; to-day it is 25.96.

The Ainu women in Japan tattoo their faces to give them the appearance of men with whiskers.

"She says her husband is awfully obliging. He'll eat almost anything that's set before him." "Dear me! She couldn't expect him to eat it if 'twas set behind him, could she?"